

1928

**THE
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION
AND THE
WORKERS**

by
JAY LOVESTONE



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The Presidential Election
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By
JAY LOVESTONE

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CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

What shall the workers do,—especially the conscious, the militant workers,—in preparation for the 1928 presidential election? Shall they continue to follow the two parties of the capitalist class, the Republican and Democratic parties? Shall they organize a new party of their own? Shall they work for the organization of a third party of small capitalists led by individuals of the type of Borah and Norris? Should the workers organize a class party of their own on a national mass basis, a big labor party based primarily on the trade unions? What about the Socialist Party? What does the Workers Party stand for? What is the outlook for a united labor ticket?

These are not abstract, academic questions. They are pressing, burning questions tied up with the every-day struggles of the workers, bound up with the most basic demands and interests of the entire working class and the exploited farmers.

The Economic Conditions

Not since 1921 has there been so much unemployment in "prosperous" America. According to the most conservative estimate of the reactionary Coolidge administration, at least 6 out of every 100 workers who were on a job last year are now out of work. At least 12 out of every one hundred workers employed in 1923, at this time, are now unemployed.

Wage cuts are increasing in frequency. As usual, the New England textile mills are setting the pace in wage-slashing. The non-union coal fields are not far behind and are preparing new wage reductions. There is talk of lower wages in the steel industry. Rumbings of wage cuts are heard with increasing regularity even in the building trades. The Western railway magnates are refusing to go through with the

award of a paltry wage increase of 30c a day given some time ago to their locomotive enginemen and firemen.

Within the last year, the payroll total has fallen by about eight cents on the dollar. For every wage dollar that the average worker received twelve months ago he now gets about ninety cents. Today the total wages are at least 11 per cent less than in 1923. The New York municipal lodging houses are "caring" for a record number this winter. Chicago now boasts a longer breadline than it has had at any time since 1913. In Omaha, the economic conditions are so deplorable for great masses of workers that a working class woman was ready to sell her body in advance for dissection purposes in a local hospital in order to procure food for her starving children.

Despite all the loud talk about farm prosperity, the farmers are still in the hole. Though the crop harvested in the last fiscal year was the largest in the history of the country, except for 1916 and 1920, yet there was a drop of nearly \$600,000,000 in the combined value of crops and animal products within the last twelve months.

In short, the Coolidge prosperity bubble and bluff have been pricked. The trend of trade and industry is unmistakably downward and the workers are beginning to feel it. Within the last six months, the economic recession has grown more acute. The reserves gathered by the workers in the better economic conditions which prevailed a year ago are fast disappearing.

In fact, so far as the great masses of unskilled and semi-skilled proletarians in the United States are concerned, prosperity has never reached them to any appreciable extent. Professor Irving Fisher of Yale University, one of the most tried and true representatives of the biggest capitalist interests of the United States, recently declared that the American masses are not at all prosperous. According to the findings of Professor Fisher, at least 93 million of our people hardly make enough for their expenses. They have an average yearly

income of at most \$500. This income at best affords the 93 million people only enough to keep themselves upon the "bottom level of health and decency." Within this overwhelming majority of the population of the United States are found the great mass of workers, the exploited farmers and large sections of the middle class.

The Immediate Political Situation

For years we have not had any big, major, sharp issue dividing the country. We have had no questions such as the problems which confronted America immediately after the war. We have had no questions of any importance which could split the population wide open into sharply defined, hostile political camps, or which would bring sharp dissensions within these political parties. Investigation indicates that in 1926 we had the lowest number of strikes and industrial disputes since we became an industrial nation.

In 1922 and in 1924, we faced such decisive issues. These issues, for example the agricultural crisis, which was then more acute than it is today, translated themselves into sharp relations politically. There were also sharp and acute differences between the workers and their exploiters—the employers. We need but recall the wave of big strikes in 1922. None of us can forget the acute agricultural depression then prevailing in the country. The combination of these two forces brought about the organization of the LaFollette movement, a third party movement led by the petty bourgeoisie and supported by great masses of workers. Since then we have not had such big issues, but now there are signs of their developing. Both at home and abroad, American capitalist reaction continues in full swing.

The Seventieth Congress has opened in the shadow of the most gigantic lobby of big interests this country has yet seen. At the head of the splendidly organized capitalist groups now dominating the millionaire and lobby-ridden Congress is the huge power-trust. Vicious anti-labor legislation is being prepared, particularly against the foreign-born workers.

In the Republican Party, Mr. Hoover, representing the

most conscious capitalist interests, and whole-heartedly endorsed by Standard Oil interests, and Governor Fuller, who murdered Sacco and Vanzetti, is leading the race for the nomination to fill the place now occupied by "King" Coolidge. In the Democratic Party, Governor Smith of New York, who has worked overtime to ruin the Garment Workers' Union of this state, and who has concealed the most sordid species of Tammany Hall corruption, is setting the pace in the Democratic race for the Presidency. The so-called progressives, the self-styled insurgent group led by Borah and Norris, have deserted the farmers' ship altogether. Especially treacherous has been the conduct of the so-called farmer-labor senator, Shipstead of Minnesota, who is now practically registered as a Republican.

Energetic efforts are today being made by the imperialists to extend and perpetuate their domination as a world power. A special drive has been launched against Latin America. Fake good-will messengers of the type of Lindbergh are now being used to draw Mexico and other countries south of the Rio Grande closer to the United States so that these weaker people might yield more easily to the pressure of American imperialism. President Coolidge and his Secretary of State, Kellogg, accompanied by Charles E. Hughes, erstwhile Secretary of State and for many years agent of the biggest oil corporations, have been rushed to the Pan-American Conference at Havana, Cuba, on a warship, in order to lend proper "tone" and "atmosphere" to the manipulations of the Yankee imperialists. While the spokesmen of Wall Street are talking about peace, their marines slaughter scores of Nicaraguans fighting for national freedom.

The silent, "economical" Coolidge is now yelling for billions for the navy. The antagonisms with England are growing sharper since the flat failure of the Geneva naval disarmament conference. America is trying to isolate Britain by a number of so-called peace manoeuvres with such imperialist powers as France. The bloody hands of Yankee imperialism are extending everywhere. New thrusts are being made by Wall Street into the Near East, the Middle East

and Far East. The percentage of net Federal government expense for past and future wars amounted to 82 cents out of every dollar spent in 1927. Since 1913 the United States has increased its expenditures for military and naval forces of destruction by 124%. This is almost twice as much as the proportion of increase by Great Britain, more than eight times the rate of the increase by Italy and about sixty times the proportion of the increase of expenditures by France in this period.

The Chinese militarists and imperialist lick-spittles, together with the American Admiral Bristol, planned their barbarous butchery of defenceless Chinese workers in Canton and peasants in the provinces.

At the same time there is developing increasing resistance to American imperialist aggrandisement. Already more than a dozen gigantic combines, cartels, have been organized by the European capitalists to beat back the American invasion of the world market. Germany and Great Britain are raising the tariff against some American goods. England is again complaining of the burdensome war debts. The developing difficulties with the Dawes Plan are only embittering the European bourgeoisie and increasing their unwillingness to continue to pay tribute to Wall Street.

The Situation in the Labor Movement

The whole trade union movement is fighting with its back to the wall. The trade unions are in danger of destruction. The fight to save even the most conservative unions is becoming more and more the major fight in the labor movement. The once powerful United Mine Workers of America is now practically paralyzed—a victim of the blackest treachery on the darkest pages of the history of our labor movement. Lewis, Murray, and company, backed up by Green and Woll, and the whole trade union official bureaucracy are guilty of sapping the very life of what was for many years the most effective fighting force in our entire trade union movement. Today these reactionary labor bureaucrats are criminally holding back the rest of the workers from

coming to the aid of the battling miners and are even putting obstacles in the way of effective miners' relief by their "do-nothing" policy in the face of terrorism and outrage of an unparalleled sort at the hands of the government and the company police and judges in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Colorado.

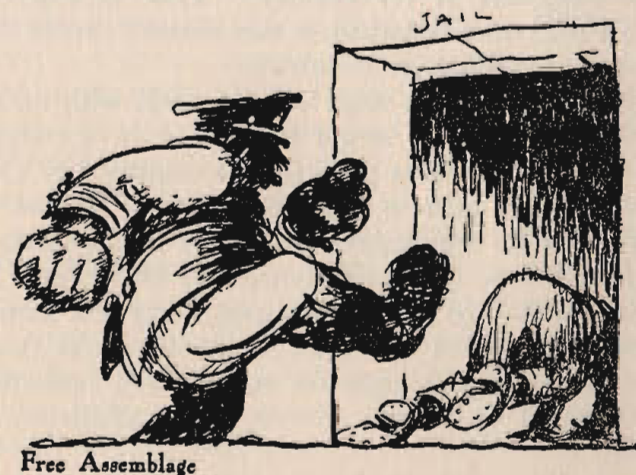
A sweeping injunction mania is menacing the workers throughout the country. Compared with Federal Judge Schoonmaker's injunction against the miners in Pennsylvania and the injunction procured against the subway workers by the New York Interborough Rapid Transit Company, the old Palmer and Daugherty injunctions of the mine and railroad strikes in 1919 and 1922 were messages of "encouragement" for the workers.

The program of the capitalist class is clear. They are out to destroy, as effective forces in determining the standards of living, even the most conservative, docile craft unions. They no longer have any real need even for such unions. At the same time the reactionary trade union leadership is doing nothing to lead the workers to resistance. This costly policy is actually helping the employers to crush the most militant fighters, as for example in the New York needle trades. Green, Woll and company are planning an abject surrender of all the rights won by the workers in many years of bitter struggle.

In this treachery the official Socialist Party leadership is playing an active and enthusiastic role. These so-called Socialists are helping, and now and then even setting the pace, in the expulsion of militant left wingers and Communists from the unions. They are sabotaging every effort to develop a labor party movement or to organize a united labor ticket for the coming Presidential elections.

But let no one think that there is no cause for optimism. There are growing signs of rising militancy. The heroic spirit of the miners, after almost a year of struggle, shows that there is plenty of resistance and fighting life in the workers. The inspiring determination of the needle trades workers and their left wing leaders indicates that the workers

will fight to the last ditch to save their unions. The increasing sympathy for Soviet Russia in the ranks of the American trade unionists, despite the campaign of calumny and terrorism waged by Green, Woll and company, is a most hopeful sign. Last and of particular importance is that the smash-up of the frenzied, high-finance schemes of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Bank has thrown a cold blanket even over the most ardent advocates of labor banking and their class collaboration schemes.



CHAPTER II.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR ROLE

With this as a background, let us examine the political parties. What are they like? What are they for?

First of all, political parties are not accidental aggregations of individuals. Political parties are organs and weapons of class warfare. No matter how confused the membership or even some of the leaders of any political party may now and then appear to be; no matter how politically illiterate some of the followers of any political party may be, yet a political party is an engine of class war. The United States has political parties, the character, form and structure of which have been determined by the specifically objective conditions in the country. That is why we find certain political manifestations in this country totally different from some in European countries.

The Republican Party with its personnel, with its following, with its leadership, would be divided in a country like France, perhaps into three parties; in a country like Germany or Czechoslovakia perhaps into four parties. In the United States we have in one Republican Party, Mr. Coolidge, Mr. Norris, Mr. Borah, Mr. LaFollette, Mr. Dawes and Messrs. Vare and Smith. In this Republican Party the interests of big capital, represented by Coolidge, are of course the ruling interests, while the petty capitalist interests and farmers' interests, represented by Borah, Norris and LaFollette, take a back seat.

What are the specific American conditions making for such conflicting relations within one such political party? The two basic reasons for this condition are:

1. In America until comparatively recent years the class lines were not sharp and the class divisions were in a state of flux. That is why, to an extent, the political parties in America are still more inclusive in the sense of not expressing as sharply as some of the European political parties certain

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class interests, nevertheless in the last resort, decisively expressing basic class interests.

2. The structure of the United States government is based on the two-party system. Comrade Lenin, in analyzing the elections held in the United States in 1912, in examining the development of the Roosevelt movement, said:

"This two-party system is one of the most powerful means of hindering the establishment of an independent party of labor."

One might correctly add that the two-party system has served to hinder the organization and to interfere with the continuation of all minority parties,—because sectional interests, in the period when class lines were not rigid, could find expression on a local scale within the framework of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Within the last 25 years there have been but two shocks to the two-party system; the one in 1912 resulting in the Roosevelt split in the Republican Party; the second in 1924 culminating in the LaFollette movement which polled the highest vote any minority party has ever polled in the United States. This was an attempt of the petty bourgeoisie inside and outside the Republican Party to assume leadership not only of the workers but of the country as a whole.

Recent years have seen new developments and changes in class relationships tending to undermine the basis for the continuation of the two-party system. However, it still remains an integral part of the government structure. This system must be broken down and it can be broken down only by an alliance between the workers and the exploited farmers. To the extent that any movement or any force makes for the break-down of the two-party system in the United States, it is a progressive movement, a progressive force, though it may temporarily place new dangers in the path of the workers. The smashing of the two-party system as a basic feature of capitalist reactionary government of the United States is a primary task before the workers. But to realize this task the workers and exploited farmers must organize their own class party and not rely in the least on good men of the petty

bourgeoisie, on so-called progressive Republican irregulars and insurgents coming from the ranks of the small capitalists, on petty bourgeois blocs or on third capitalist parties.

The Republican Party

The Republican Party is frankly the party of the biggest capitalist interests in the country. It doesn't hide it. Less and less does it seek to pretend that it represents all the people. Wall Street plainly endorses Coolidge and Coolidge openly welcomes Wall Street support. "Wall Street and big business probably will find no one whom they like better than Coolidge," said the *World's Work* in October, 1927 (page 577).

From 1922 up to November, 1924, the petty bourgeoisie in the cities, and the farming masses, on a large scale, left the Republican Party. After the defeat of the LaFollette movement in 1924, the petty bourgeoisie went back into the Republican Party. They stayed in the Republican Party and began to show signs of deserting it again only recently with the sharpening of the agricultural situation and the deepening recession in industry. The importance of this development becomes more clear when we examine the development of the Norris-Borah insurgent bloc.

The Republican Party has had three main stages of development. At one time it was a militant party for social progress. This was its first stage. In this stage the workers played a substantial role in developing it. In this stage the historic mission of the Republican Party was the support of the development of capitalism against chattel slavery.

In the second period of the development of the Republican Party its mission was to help develop America industrially and financially, to establish in this country the most powerful capitalism. The party flourished in this period also. This was the party of such slogans as "The Full Dinner Pail" and "Prosperity"—the party of the conscious promotion of and open obedience to gigantic industrial and financial enterprise.

Today the Republican Party is in its third and last stage. It frankly appears as an agency of monopoly capital, only,

and its mission is to keep things as they are and to maintain the present topmost layer of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. The real slogan and spirit of the Republican Party today is "Don't Rock the Boat." Anybody who does anything to disturb conditions is rocking the boat and capitalist prosperity, and is interfering with the present task of the Republican Party which is to maintain things as they are with greater energy than any other party.

But is the Republican Party a homogenous party? It is not! In this party are the big business interests of the middle Atlantic and Eastern States, certain farmers of the middle West, and even some petty bourgeoisie in the far West. The leadership of the big bourgeoisie over the other sections of the capitalist class within the Republican Party is today still indisputable. Here and there somebody might try to challenge it. Obviously the contradictions of capitalist production are reflecting themselves within the capitalist class and therefore within the Republican Party. But the biggest bourgeoisie still manage to continue their leadership over the overwhelming majority of the petty bourgeoisie, the farming and the working masses. Despite all the support the Democratic Party has been getting from the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, the Republican Party still has more workers voting for it than the Democrats have.

The Democratic Party

The Democratic Party was born and flourished at a time when it was the organ, the class weapon of those forces in the country which fought against federalism, against the establishment of a powerfully centralized government. At that time the Democratic Party had a constructive function to perform in the development of the United States.

Came the Civil War. What was the position of the Democratic Party nationally in the Civil War on the question of slavery? Continuing despite changed social conditions their old policy of states' rights, they became the party which primarily defended chattel slavery against the higher order of capitalism.

Since that time the Democratic Party, except for the time when it was stimulated and given a respite by the Populist Party and more recently by the Roosevelt division in the Republican Party, has not held the Presidential office. In 1920 only 127 out of the 531 electoral votes went to the Democrats. In 1924 only 136 electoral votes were cast for the Democrats. The Democratic Party offers a substantial American peculiarity of class expression. Fundamentally it expresses the same interests as the Republican Party in the sense that it is a party which stands uncompromisingly for the capitalist system. One of the leaders of the Republican Party in an editorial in the *World's Work* recently declared that man to man in business hours, everybody knows that the Republican Party and the Democratic Party have no basic differences. This is the truth but we must be careful not to accept it superficially. There are certain differences between the Republican and Democratic parties but these differences are decreasing rapidly.

The Democratic Party is a coalition of various opposition elements within the bourgeoisie; yet it has a certain manner of approach to the working class in this country, different from the Republican. It still poses now and then as being for the workers, particularly in local situations. The Republican Party has even dropped its slogan of the "Full Dinner Pail." It now boasts of big dividends, high railroad rates, bullish stock markets and prosperity. It doesn't try, even to the limited extent that the Democratic Party does, to appeal to the workers. Of course, the appeal of the Democratic Party to the workers is only a pose, but the Republicans have long ago lost even this pose.

In the Democratic Party one finds the New York organization, Tammany, increasing its influence and winning a strategic position. Today Tammany is an organ of big business and in the last resort is as loyal to big business as the United States Steel Corporation is. The solid South is the basis of the existence of the Democratic Party as a separate political entity from the Republicans. But as the industrialization of the South proceeds apace, the solid South as a real

basis for the existence of the Democratic Party is disappearing. In the West the strength of the Democratic Party consists of some remnants of old Populism and certain sectional small capital, native Western capital, if we may so call it, struggling against the domination of the big Eastern financiers and industrialists.

In New England the Democratic Party doesn't differ from the Republican Party. There we have such types of Democrats as Senator Bayard of Delaware and the late Alton B. Parker, who was a Democratic Presidential candidate at one time. The last gasp of liberalism, as a living force in the Democratic Party, was reflected in the first Wilson administration, the traditions of which are still supposedly maintained in mangled form and exploited for intra-party reasons by such elements as Governor Donahey and ex-Senator Pomerance of Ohio and Newton D. Baker.

When the first big fundamental issue arises in this country, the Democratic Party, because of its heterogeneous composition, because of its conflicting class elements, will either evade the issue in order to avoid disruption of its organization or it will be snowed under because it did not take a clear position. This will split the Democratic Party wide open or will paralyze its influence considerably.

There are, however, certain forces still holding the Democratic Party together. One should not sneer at the fact that in this country the traditional habits of voting still count and are powerful forces. In the smaller towns and in the rural sections, the political tradition is so strong that Democratic father begets Democratic son and Republican grandfather begets Republican grandson. This affords a certain amount of strength to the Democratic Party. But even in tradition the Democratic Party is splitting wide open. The Democrats in the South and West have as their traditional heroes Jefferson and Jackson. If we go East in the Atlantic Coast states facing Europe, the Democrats tend to worship Wilson. Between the Jeffersonian Democracy of agrarian-

ism and the Wilsonian Democracy of imperialism there is an unbridgable gap.

Secondly, the South has not yet completely gotten over its resentment of the rule of the carpet-baggers, of the military dictatorship by the victorious Northern armies at the conclusion of the Civil War. Of course the question of patronage of office is always a force which tends to make for the continued existence of the Democratic Party. Then, the very existence of the two-party system of government tends automatically to prolong the life of the Democratic Party as the opposition, though not as a ruling party.

Resentment and ancestor-worship can never be the basis of a political party. Since the Civil War there has been only one Democratic president who served eight years in succession. That was Wilson and the question of Wilson's election in 1926 was a question of victory by a fraction. If Mr. Hughes had gotten a few more votes in California, Wilson would never have been president a second time.

Some of the leading Republicans declare that there is no longer any basis of existence for the Democratic Party. That is not altogether correct. There is still some basis for its existence though this basis is disappearing. The fact is that the petty bourgeoisie and some of the agricultural masses who have essentially a petty bourgeois ideology, and certain middle capitalists, as well as some of the big capitalists, still find in the Democratic Party a fighting weapon in the class struggle. This shows itself more clearly locally where class issues are not always as sharply fought out as they are nationally.

It is this factor which accounts for the Democratic Party, with its future behind it, still having in this country today 22 out of the 48 governors, 47 out of the 96 senators and 194 out of the 445 congressmen.

The Democratic Party today is a picture of contradictions and conflicts. The tendency of the Southern Democrats now is to forget their hereditary habits. Some of them, the poorer ones, are beginning to look upon themselves as discontented

farmers. Others, the richer ones, representing the growing industrial interests, are beginning to look upon themselves as flourishing capitalists. This manifestation can only lead to the undoing of the Democratic Party and to a fundamental realignment in American politics.

On only one issue is there a tendency to agreement in the ranks of the Democratic Party membership, on the question of the World Court. There is no agreement in the Democratic Party on prohibition. Smith is dripping wet; McAdoo is bone dry. There is growing disagreement in their ranks on the question of the tariff. All Democrats, however, agree that the country needs good roads. Very probably, however, the Democratic standard bearer in 1928 will learn that not all good roads lead to the White House; and that not even such agents of virtue as prohibition and the Catholic Church will help in this respect.

The Socialist Party

Let us examine the Socialist Party immediately after the Republican and Democratic because it is closest to the Republicans and Democrats.

The Socialist Party also is not a homogeneous party. We do not speak here of the Socialist Party as an organization, because, except in New York where the reactionary Jewish Daily Forward has thousands of dollars to throw away and in Milwaukee where there is still a Socialist Party administration and a so-called Socialist daily paper, "The Leader," does there exist any Socialist Party organization. We speak here of the Socialist Party following; of the semi and near socialistic ideology which is still something of a force to be reckoned with in this country.

Within the Socialist Party there are three main sections overlapping each other, not distinct or basically separated from each other. One current is to be found in the remnants of the old Debs followers, the remnants of the old Socialists who used to follow the Socialist Party as a party of protest.

Secondly, we have in the orbit of Socialist Party influence,

that section of the foreign-born workers which is politically backward enough to be dominated and controlled by the foreign-born trade union bureaucrats and the Jewish Daily Forward machine.

Thirdly, we have within the radius of Socialist Party influence, certain loose sections of the petty bourgeoisie. By loose we mean politically unattached. In this class are included certain liberals. Some of the liberal Democrats of the type of Frank P. Walsh, former chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission, have in the past cast their ballots for Debs. In the state of Wisconsin, the Republican Party, led by La Follette, and the Socialist Party, led by Berger, have repeatedly made election alliances with each other. In the past there was some opposition in the Socialist Party to such alliances. Now any opposition to such an alliance with the La Follette forces would probably cost a worker his membership in the Socialist Party of Milwaukee. Officially the Socialist Party may not admit this policy, may even pretend to oppose it, but in practice this is the case. The recent election of Victor Berger as chairman of the Socialist Party is clear proof of the fact that it has lost its last fig leaf of militancy—the tradition of Debs which once hid its vulgar opportunism and camouflaged its crass social reformism.

The election of Victor Berger to the chairmanship of the Socialist Party shows that the Socialist Party has gone completely to the right. Today the Socialist Party is an integral part of the trade union bureaucracy, of the official reactionary leadership of the American Federation of Labor which in turn is an organic instrument of the imperialist clique dominating American economic and political life.

Let us turn the searchlight on some of the recent declarations of the Socialist Party and its officials to see the real face of this organization, which still pretends to speak for the workers. In a recent statement of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party appearing in the *New Leader* of October 22, 1927, we find the following:

“The two parties of capitalism have no program and seek no

program. They have no issues and they avoid real issues. They drift with the system they represent and are only concerned with public power and party plunder.

“In the maze of problems that confront the nation, we must inspire the working masses with their potential power, the need of united political action, of breaking old Party fetters, of moving as a great army of enlightened voters to the ballot boxes to wrest power from the despoilers. The time is ripe for a third party political revolution and the Socialist Party must do its duty in the work of education, organization and providing that inspiration that leads to steady conquests and final victory.”

This is pathetic confusion which one would be tempted to pity if he were not to realize that this statement merely affords further proof of the fact that the Socialist Party leadership is consciously throwing sand into the eyes of the workers in order to mislead them and to cripple their fighting capacity against the bourgeoisie.

To tell the American workers that the Republican and Democratic Parties, the two parties of capitalism, have no program, is to feed them with criminal nonsense. The two parties of capitalism have a program. It is a clear-cut capitalist program, aimed clearly at the workers.

To speak of a maze of problems confronting the nation when we should speak of the needs and problems of the working class as a class, is outright treachery for a party which pretends at least slight understanding and acceptance of the teachings of Marx and Engels.

To speak of breaking “old Party fetters,” actually breaking the old party dictatorship by forming, as it were, bread lines at the ballot boxes, is to be as blind as a bat, as deaf as stone to the lessons of the great working class revolution in Russia and of the lessons of the class war in the United States.

To speak of “a third party political revolution” is plainly ridiculous. What kind of a third party? A petty bourgeois party, led by Borah? Will Borah make a revolution? What kind of a revolution will he make? Or is it to be a labor party, to unite all of the workers politically? Why does the Socialist Party go no further than to give lip-service to the

labor party? Why does it always talk of the labor party movement with its tongue in its cheek?

Recently, the Socialist Party made much noise over the successful election campaign it waged in Reading, Pennsylvania. What does the Socialist Party victory in Reading promise for the workers? In the "Labor Advocate," official mouthpiece of the Socialist Party of Reading, we find an editorial which declares in part the attitude of the Socialists as follows:

"What is more, they (the Socialists) understand that their responsibilities will be those of capitalist officials rather than of Socialist Party members. . . . Working class residential streets will receive at least as much consideration when improvements are contemplated as will the thoroughfares of the more aristocratic neighborhoods. . . .

"These are some of the things which the Socialists of Reading can and will do. They are things which are neither Socialistic nor capitalistic but plain commonsense activities and policies which will win them the continued confidence of their fellow townsmen."

The editorial herewith quoted speaks of fellow townsmen instead of fellow workers. It speaks of treating the workers' streets as well as aristocratic streets. Obviously one cannot but conclude that the Socialist Party will guarantee to treat the capitalists as well as the workers. Why should the capitalists fear them? That is why they don't.

James P. Maurer, one of the Councilmen elected by the Socialists in Reading, in addressing a Socialist celebration meeting in New York, declared:

"We are going to give the workers a typical working-class government but if there is a strike in Reading while we are in power, the capitalist employer will have his property and life protected as he never had it before."

This is an expression from the lips of one of the oldest elements of the Socialist Party. Certainly it is *not* an expression of a party which speaks *only* for the working class. This is not working-class government. Maurer has had a chance to see a real working-class government in Soviet Russia and he knows that there capitalists employers are not protected. The remnants of capitalist forces in Soviet Russia are not being protected but are being wiped out. One cannot expect

the Socialist administration in Reading to establish Socialism there, but one should at least expect from the victorious Socialist Party in Reading that no matter what the townspeople who are not workers may think, no matter how much it might cost the big and small bourgeoisie, no matter how much the ordinary so-called sacred decorum of capitalist government is disrupted, every step which would help the working class as a class, which would strengthen the class interests of the workers, would be pushed forward. Such promises the Socialist administration in Reading does not hold for the workers.

In reality the Socialist Party is day by day, in certain localities, more and more prepared to merge itself with a section of the Democratic Party. In New York many "Socialists" have been voting for Al Smith. That is why we find on local scales citizens' committees of the capitalists endorsing with increasing frequency certain Socialist candidates. That is why we find camouflaged arrangements, secret agreements and understandings entered into on a local scale by the Socialist Party, even with the Republican Party.

Yet the Socialist Party as a political party, despite its reactionary leadership, is still distinct from the two big parties of capital and must be treated as such. Today there is no room in the Socialist Party for any worker who has any class consciousness or class pride in him. As a force of working class militancy, the Socialist Party is dead. As a force helping the bourgeoisie mislead the workers, the Socialist Party still has some life and therefore, is still somewhat dangerous for the workers.

The Workers (Communist) Party

As a parliamentary force, the Workers (Communist) Party is today still very weak. There are a number of reasons for this which we need not examine here. But in the various activities of the labor movement, the Workers Party is far stronger than it is in the parliamentary campaigns.

Today the Workers (Communist) Party is the only force of opposition to reaction in the labor movement. It is the

only force of conscious militant opposition to capitalist reaction in the United States. When Mr. Green and Mr. Woll fight the Communists, they do not fight wind-mills. They would much rather have peace than war with us. We know that the only peace they can have with us is the peace of surrender to us, which would mean their extermination as factors in the labor movement, the repudiation of their policies from top to bottom. They know that the only peace they would make with us would be our abject surrender to them. Neither is possible. Therefore, the sharpness of the struggle.

In the trade union movement and in the ranks of the unorganized, as well as organized, the Workers Party is a much greater force than it is in the parliamentary activities. The following of the Workers Party is largely amongst the proletarians of the basic industries who are to a great extent foreign-born and disfranchised.

The disgust with the deadly opportunist practices and misconceptions of parliamentary activities, practiced for years by the Socialist Party, has left an indelible impression on the militant workers, unduly cooling their ardor for participation in parliamentary campaigns. This is an objective, though objectionable fact which the Workers Party is facing and overcoming.

The Workers Party has only recently begun to develop a proper evaluation of parliamentary action and campaigns. Though large numbers of workers have advanced enough at times to follow Communist leadership in the struggle for basic economic issues, for certain fundamental rights such as an increase in wages, improvement in working conditions, the right to organize, save the unions, the violation of injunctions, even these workers are not yet advanced enough to break, en masse, their capitalist influence on a class basis by voting for the Workers (Communist) Party candidates. Also, we must not overlook the terrorism against Communists by the government, the employers, and their labor lieutenants.

The program and the issues of the Workers Party will be dealt with elsewhere.

Other Parties, Groups and Blocs

Locally there still exist certain other labor parties. For instance, in Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, Washington and in sections of some states, we find labor party organizations. But there is no national labor party of a mass character today.

The insurgents and progressives should more properly be called irregular Republicans. The economic basis of this group of Senators and Congressmen is to be found primarily in the agricultural crisis. This bloc is largely an expression of agricultural discontent. The whole bloc system in American politics is a reflection of the transition stage leading towards the disintegration of the two party system. Because of the growing acute economic recession, this movement is winning the support of some of the petty bourgeoisie and workers in the industrial centers. Thus we find that the "Federation News," official organ of the Chicago Federation of Labor, in speaking of Norris, one of the leaders of this bloc, said editorially:

"Senator Norris merits the implicit confidence of the vast army of toilers in this country. . . . He is eminently entitled to the highest place in the land. . . . Labor can elect any president. It has the majority of voters. It can do so in strict compliance with the non-partisan policy of the A. F. of L. . . ."

"Labor today evidently is not ready as yet to elect enough friends and defeat sufficient enemies. More organization, more educational work and more funds are needed. When that is accomplished, labor will be able to elect such real champions of justice as Senator Norris."

In fact the "insurgent" and "progressive" bloc tends to become the haven of all protest. One Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan has recently declared that after touring forty-two states he can report truthfully that the progressive platform is suitable to the voters.

Norris is the best symbol of this section of the petty bourgeoisie, now that LaFollette is dead. There is much significance to be attached to the cautious, hesitant, wavering Senator Borah joining the insurgents and participating in their Oc-

tober 8, 1927 conference. The sharpening of the economic recession, the deepening of the agricultural difficulties and the logical sequel of this in the renunciation of the Presidency by Coolidge have widened the chasm between the various sections of the capitalists represented in the Republican Party enough to encourage even so wavering a petty bourgeois politician as Borah to jump further off the reservation.

Unless unforeseen developments occur, the "insurgents" and "progressives" will not constitute themselves into a third party, distinct from the Republicans and Democrats. They will try to make deals with the Republicans and Democrats. Herein lie their maximum strength and their minimum weakness. Already they have sold out to the reactionary Republican machine and enabled it to organize Coolidge control of the Senate, to re-elect the officers. The so-called farmer-labor Senator Shipstead set the pace in this surrender to the big bourgeois Senators and can now be registered as a Republican.

The insurgent movement is progressive insofar as it is a force disrupting the two-party system. It is however a serious menace to the workers and exploited farmers because it becomes an obstacle to the development of an independent class party of the workers—a Labor Party. Such petty bourgeois politicians as Shipstead, Brookhart, Norris and Borah are not friends or servants of the workers but are agents of the smaller capitalists and must be fought as such.

Whatever other so-called political parties exist are not worth the ink and paper which their mention would consume.

CHAPTER III.

ISSUES OF THE 1928 ELECTIONS

The Capitalist View Point

From the capitalist viewpoint, there are many issues in the 1928 elections. The capitalists have a mass production of issues—all kinds of issues.

1. *Prohibition*

First of all there is prohibition. There is lots of talk about this as an issue. Yet prohibition will be no real issue in the 1928 elections. Every capitalist politician knows that prohibition is more an issue within the two parties of capital than between the two parties of capital. There are as many differences on the question of prohibition within the Republican Party as there are within the Democratic Party. The Republican Senator Edge of New Jersey, a messenger boy of the Standard Oil interests, is a sworn enemy of prohibition but Coolidge is arid. Smith is slippery wet while McAdoo is as dry as the desert. All of these may differ on the quality of beer but this difference is not a difference between their parties. McAdoo, the Democrat, and Coolidge, the Republican, represent sections of the bourgeoisie which believe in prohibition as a force making for efficiency of the workers while the Democratic Smith and the Republican Edge are against prohibition because they don't feel convinced that the interests of the class they serve are enhanced by prohibition.

2. *Taxation*

Nor will the question of taxation, in a fundamental sense, be an issue between the Republican and Democratic parties. In the long run both parties follow a policy of lightening as much as possible the burden of taxation for the big capitalists and transferring it as much as possible, indirectly it is true, to the backs of the workers.

3. *The World Court*

Sooner or later the question of international relations and the World Court and League of Nations will be a big issue in the ranks of the bourgeoisie but that time has not yet arrived. The American capitalist-class viewpoint on this question is not yet sufficiently clear and decisive, though, because of the growing influence of finance capital, the tendency making for America's participation in some sort of world court or fake League of Nations, is growing. At this moment, however, the differences between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party on this question are determined largely by sectional class interests rather than by homogeneous, uniform class interests. The finance capitalists who still support the Democratic Party are as much for American participation in a World Court or League of Nations as are many of the big bankers who fill the cash boxes of the Republican Party.

4. *The Tariff*

The tariff used to be the food of the stuffed donkey in every election. It was once the big issue of the Democratic Party. Not so today. There is a growing number of Southern Democratic industrialists who are as enthusiastic advocates of high tariff as some of the wealthy Republican industrialists of the New England tier of states. At the same time there are strident voices of the bankers high in the Republican circles calling for a lowering of the tariff. On this question as on other questions, much depends on the line of business that the Republican or Democrat is in.

5. *Power of the Government*

There is some talk about the question of centralized Federal state power being a vital issue. This may be an issue because of the increasing power of the government bureaucracy. But it would not play a decisive role in the coming campaign now that the country has been treated to the Coolidge renunciation. Besides, both capitalist parties are agreed on using the full federal power to crush strikes and smash unions.

6. *Corruption*

There is the perennial question of corruption. That's always an issue between the two parties of capitalism. Both are corrupt and that is one case where both tell the truth when they accuse each other. Here we have the case of the teapot calling the kettle black. They always tell something about each other along the dirty line. The Teapot Dome scandal did not deliver for the Democrats as much as they had expected in 1924. The Burns-Sinclair scandal won't deliver for the Democrats as much as they hope for in 1928. Nor will the election purchases of Vare and Smith bring very much help to the Democrats. The masses of the country are on the whole too backward politically to get excited over corruption. Certainly corruption is not the boundary line between the Republican and Democratic parties. Instead it is the common bond.

7. *Farm Relief*

Farm relief will be a burning issue in the 1928 elections. All kinds of efforts will be made, fraudulent of course, to tie the farmers as a tail to the kite of the big bourgeoisie. American capitalism cannot meet its farm crisis. The farm crisis is not a question of good crops or bad crops. Sometimes the crops are so good that prices go down and the farmer goes out—driven off the farm by bankruptcy. When the crops are poor the farmer's income shrinks still lower. The farm crisis in this country is deeply rooted in fundamental differences between the method of production in agriculture which is still individualist in character and the method of production in highly developed large scale capitalist industry and manufacture.

The Workers' View Point

For the workers of this country there are five basic issues:

1. *The Strikebreaking Government*

The United States Government, the various State municipal and other governmental departments, are plainly strike-break-

ing agents used by the exploiters, the employers, to smash the workers. In the 1928 elections the truth must be told about the government in its role not as an arbiter between classes or above classes but as an outright agency of the employing class, the capitalist class, to exploit and enslave the working class and poor farmers.

2. *Injunctions*

Recent months have seen the plaguing of the working class by an epidemic of injunctions. The courts are the most skilled and effective strike-breaking agents of the employers. Injunctions are the most dangerous and concentrated expression of the defense of the capitalist class interests by the American courts.

The injunction handed down by Federal Judge Schoonmaker in the Pennsylvania Circuit Court, if obeyed, sounds the death-warrant of the miners' unions. The decision of the United States Supreme Court that the West Virginia coal operators have a full right to restrain members of the United Mine Workers or any other labor organization from unionizing the miners, is a decision which lays the basis for the government's paralyzing any campaign to organize the unorganized. Any worker who has any spark of militancy, of class consciousness, must face this question of injunctions with a full determination to disregard them, to ignore such laws handed down by the judges. The Workers Party openly stands for the breaking of all injunctions.

Injunctions are being used to rob the workers of the gains they have made through years of struggle, to destroy the organizations it has taken them decades to build. Injunctions must be made a real issue by the workers in the 1928 elections.

3. *The Right to Organize and Strike*

Even the conservative craft unions are no longer wanted and are less and less tolerated by the capitalists. The strike as a weapon of the workers is being outlawed. The union, as an organization of the workers, is being wiped out. The right

of assembly, of freedom of speech, of organization, of strike; all of these must be fought for vigorously in the 1928 elections if the workers desire to maintain even the faintest semblance of freedom for themselves.

4. *Farm Relief*

Every worker must fight for genuine farm relief. The American Government has time and again given away billions of dollars in land grants, in tax refunds, in tariff revenues, in outright donations to the millionaires, to the railroad magnates, to the coal kings, to the industrial barons, to the banking overlords. The workers, united with the farmers, must force the government to take some steps at least to alleviate the sharp crisis and acute suffering in which the great masses in the rural areas find themselves.

5. *Social Insurance*

A strong campaign must be made by the workers for the enactment of legislation providing, on a national scale, for insurance of the unemployed, aged workers, and those subject to accident in industry.

The government and the employers should pay for this insurance which is to be administered by the workers' organizations.

6. *American Imperialism and the Danger of War*

Last but not least, the question of American imperialism is a major problem in the coming campaign. The war danger is acute. American imperialist aggrandisement is arousing and mobilizing its competitors against it. American imperialist brutality is stirring up the peoples of Latin-America to resistance. The outrageous murders of liberty-loving Nicaraguans by the Marines must be brought home to every American worker. The capitalist class is guilty of this murder. Every militant worker must do his all to develop effective forces of opposition which will make impossible the recurrence of such horrible crimes by the United States.

CHAPTER IV.
THE CANDIDATES

1. *Republican Party*

There are lots of candidates for president now that Mr. Coolidge has "chosen" not to run. Primarily Mr. Coolidge, though he very probably would have been elected if he had run, has chosen not to run for three reasons:

1—The economic recessions. 2—The sharpening agricultural crisis and 3—the fear of still strong workers and petty and even middle-bourgeois opposition to the dramatizing of the extension of executive power and centralization of government which a third term for Coolidge would develop. Mr. Coolidge might have challenged this prejudice and this opposition to the third term but it would be a costly victory for the big bourgeoisie. Abstractly it is still not impossible that Coolidge will run although it is most improbable.

We have the candidate, Mr. Hughes. Charles E. Hughes is a very good candidate for big business. But he does not make an appeal to the rank and file of the Republican Party. And in a national election campaign especially, the Republican Party values its rank and file.

Then there is Mr. Lowden. Mr. Lowden is a millionaire to whom everybody who rides a Pullman pays a tribute. Lowden married well and got in soft when he married the daughter of Pullman and inherited her father's millions. He was a little careless in spending too openly hundreds of thousands of dollars in the 1920 Republican Party primaries. That is why, despite all the noise he is making about being a champion of the farmers, Lowden has less strength today than he had in 1920. It is true Lowden has a number of big wealthy farmers for him, but this does not give him the nomination.

Then there is Dawes. Dawes has a good chance. He is a violent open-shopper, a swash-buckling labor-hater. Dawes

has a certain advantage in speaking some of the language supposedly of the masses. He knows how to be a banker and to swear at the same time. Such "lowly" qualities are high virtues sometimes for the American bourgeoisie. We recall Harding. Politically he was a nonentity, a zero, a minus quantity; yet Harding was a fellow who knew how to smile and behind that smile there could hide for a number of years the whole Teapot Dome along with "the President's daughter" and every form of sordid corruption. In capitalist politics a smile often counts a lot.

Dawes knows how to smoke his pipe upside down. He is the fellow who arranged the McNary-Haugen Bill in which the farmers voted for the banking interests by supporting the McFadden Bill while the banking interests voted for the farmers by having their Senators vote for the McNary-Haugen Bill. Of course there was only one little thing overlooked in this deal. The big bankers could call on their President Coolidge to veto the McNary-Haugen Bill while the defenders of the so-called farm relief measure could not induce the president to veto the McFadden Bill after they had been double crossed in his veto of the McNary-Haugen Bill. Through this manoeuvre Dawes has gained some strength, for the moment, with some of the middle farmers. Dawes is a serious candidate though he was put in the vice-presidential ice-box.

Mr. Mellon is the ablest Republican cabinet officer but his big business connections are too obvious and too crude to make him the Republican candidate for president. Mellon cannot make any mass appeal at all.

Last and the most likely candidate of the Republican Party, the best bet, is Hoover. Hoover is today the best symbol of big capitalist efficiency, mass production, intensive exploitation, scientific management. If there is a flood in Mississippi, Hoover is the engineer who "saves" the Southern Democrats! If somebody starves in famine-stricken Russia; even the poor Russians, Hoover is there to "help" them! Some people call him the Secretary of Commerce. Hoover should more properly be called Secretary of Commerce and super-secretary of

every other department of the government. There is no federal government bureau in which Hoover doesn't have his finger somehow or other.

In the South Hoover will be sold and bring votes on the basis of the Mississippi flood relief; in the West on the basis of his being for the development of the continental waterway project. In the East he represents Big Business. Governor Fuller of Massachusetts, who burned the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, has already endorsed Hoover and is openly spoken of as his running mate for vice-president. Senator Edge of New Jersey, a member of the royal family (brother-in-law of President Walter C. Teagle) of the Standard Oil of New Jersey, is an ardent advocate of Hoover. It was on the basis of the Lever Act, framed by Hoover, that the injunction was gotten out to break the miners' strike in 1919.

Just as after the war, Harding with his smile was pushed forward as a candidate of relief from the war strain, so now, when American imperialism is being denounced for its Shylock methods and mercenary policies and when American imperialism is so anxious to boast of its efficiency, will a candidate like Hoover be pushed forward to meet the present situation as a symbol of American idealism and humanitarianism, as one who, to many liberals of the "New Republic" type, will appear as the savior even of the Russian Revolution and to other fake liberals will appear as the only one, because of his efficiency as a capitalist magnate, to save the country from unemployment and other acute depressions as well as incidentally to strengthen American imperialism.

The Democratic Candidates

First, there is Ritchie, Governor of Maryland. He stands for States' Rights. That's his hobby. But he stands for States' Rights just enough to suit the big bourgeoisie of the South. Maryland is one of those border states where northern capital is eating its way in and getting control. Ritchie, however, will not be very anxious to protect States' Rights should he be elected President and a national railway strike is proclaimed during his administration. Under these circum-

stances Ritchie would gladly violate his own State's rights and send federal troops to smash the ranks of the railway strikers in Maryland.

Walsh of Montana is presidential timber, though he is a Catholic. Walsh is a sort of a Christopher Columbus in the realm of corruption for the Democrats. He discovered the Teapot Dome.

There is the multi-millionaire, Owen D. Young of the General Electric Company. He is said to be the illegitimate but real father of the Dawes Plan. Dawes is the official, legal, but not actual father. Young has some chance but not much.

Finally there is Al Smith. He will be popularized. Perhaps his name will be changed to "Pal" Smith. In the last instance, Smith represents the interests of the big bourgeoisie just as Hoover does. He has a certain history, certain origin and some Tammany Hall connections that may be obstacles to him but they will be overcome. These very obstacles may even be made to serve the bourgeoisie well in that they may be used to bring Smith closer to the masses and thus camouflage his real job more effectively.

Smith has a good smile. He knows how to take a drink. He even knows how to give away a drink. He represents the capitalist interests dominating the Democratic Party today much more than he did in 1924. The western capitalist interests in the Democratic Party and those Southern capitalist interests in the Democratic Party hitherto represented by McAdoo are today weaker than they were four years ago. The Eastern capitalist interests are today more powerful than ever in the Democratic Party. Smith's hold on the New York State electoral vote is a big advantage for him in the Democratic Party. On the whole, Smith is a petty bourgeois glove in which there is hidden a big bourgeois iron fist.

But on the basis of present conditions there is little possibility of Smith being elected. The maximum possible number of electoral votes he could get is 249. The minimum he needs is 266. Even if the solid South should stay solid for

him and not break he could get there only 114 electoral votes. If one is charitable to and optimistic for Smith and he is given New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada and even Wisconsin, he will still have only a maximum of 249 or an insufficient number of electoral votes to secure the Presidency.



Free Speech

CHAPTER V.

TOWARDS A LABOR PARTY

Now what is the task before the workers? Our working class is politically weak. We have no independent mass party of the workers. The Workers (Communist) Party believes that the basic task confronting the American workers and exploited farmers in the 1928 elections, is their unification and their organization into a Labor Party.

In words, now and then, the Socialist Party declares for a labor party but it discards its declared purpose and confuses even its words with talk of "third progressive party revolution." Very likely the Socialist Party would seriously consider becoming part and parcel of the Norris-Borah group if developments should assume such a course that the latter would organize themselves into an independent third petty-bourgeois political party. It is true the Socialist Party leadership does not openly admit such a course today, but Messrs. Berger and Hillquit and other close followers pursue a policy inevitably leading to that. It is not unlikely that they would enter such an amalgamation even though the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy still pursued the bankrupt policy of non-partisan political action, and did not go even to the extent of breaking with the Democratic and Republican Parties as they did in 1924.

The Communists are aware of the fact that merely to agitate for a labor party is not sufficient. The Communists never propose any platform or program unless it is based soundly on the objective conditions.

Basic Conditions for a Labor Party

What are the basic conditions for a labor party in the United States? There are four. The slogan "For a Labor Party" corresponds adequately with the stage of development, with the degree of class-consciousness of the American labor movement. Thus it is an appeal to hundreds of thousands

of workers. Much as we may be proud of our Communist Party, much as we know that our Party is and will be the Party to lead the workers to victory in decisive struggle, as it is distinguishing itself at this time in everyday struggles, yet we realize that in the present stage of lack of class-consciousness, of low political development among the workers, our Party does not make a sufficient mass appeal, particularly in the election campaigns, in the parliamentary struggles. We therefore recognize that in the present stage of development, the basic task is to unite all the workers as workers into a party of their own.

Second, recent years have seen a growth of a powerfully centralized government in the United States. There are today, exclusive of the army and navy, well over half a million of federal government employees. With the growth of imperialism, with the development of large scale production and the massing of hundreds and even thousands of workers into one industrial plant and with the mobilization of thousands of workers in gigantic class struggles, the government plays an increasing role of strike-breaking, of being the defender of the interests of the exploiters against the workers. This tends to produce a condition in which the struggles for the most basic conditions assume more and more a political character, and the workers are more and more forced to react against the government, to come into clash with the government, to react politically. Herein is the basic factor for the labor party. Look at the injunction menace. See what's happening in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Colorado.

Another basic force making for a labor party movement in the United States is the development of a homogeneous working class. The narrowing gap between skilled and unskilled during the war, the shutting off of immigration, and the development of a native proletariat in the basic industries through the expropriation of American-born farmers, all tend to increase the homogeneity of the American working class and thus further lay the basis for a class party of the workers on a national, mass scale.

Fourth, "The Labor Party" is an effective unifying slogan. Workers who have voted the Republican ticket or the Democratic ticket or were once supporters of LaFollette or the Socialist ticket, may not yet be ready to vote for the Communist candidates en masse. The labor party ticket affords these workers a unifying basis. Building-trades workers on strike in California, the garment-trades workers in struggle in New York, the locked-out miners in Pennsylvania and Ohio, the striking coal miners in Colorado, to all of these an effective appeal can be made with the unifying slogan of "The Labor Party."

The test of progressivism of any labor organization in the coming elections will be where it stands on the question of the labor party. If the Socialist Party should in 1928 stand in the way of a labor party or perhaps even pose as the labor party, it will be committing the worst and blackest crime it has yet committed against the workers of this country.

Why a Labor Party in the United States?

The question might be asked: Why is it that the Workers Party believes that in America the development of the working class politically, the development of a mass workers' party must take the form of a labor party? Why is it that in some countries, let us say Germany, France, Russia, and Italy, the working class has advanced politically through the social democratic type of party based on individual organization rather than on the labor party type which is based primarily on the trade unions and on the labor organizations as such, with a collective membership rather than individual membership? It is to be noticed that the labor party type has been developed in the Anglo-Saxon countries and Belgium.

The answer to this basic question has been given very clearly by John Pepper, in his noteworthy article entitled "Why a Labor Party?" (*Workers Monthly*, January, 1926), when he said:

"The history of these countries and especially the history of the working class will explain to us how the Labor Party type developed

historically in certain countries and the Social-Democratic type in others. In the countries with a Labor Party, at first the trade unions (England) and later the political parties arose. Vice-versa, where we have mass Social-Democratic parties, we see that at first the political party and later the trade unions were formed, as in Russia, Austria, Germany, etc.

"That is, however, not yet the basic reason. When we analyze further, we find that in countries where an imperialist development or at least an industrial monopolist development split the working class at an early date, the trade unions were formed first, while the political parties arose very much later. The divided working class is not able to form a political party because, firstly, the aristocratic section of the working class is not interested in the political party. This aristocratic section of the working class was able to defend its interests in the trade unions; its political interests were ideologically, and in part in reality not different from those of the bourgeoisie. The other section, the real proletariat, was, on the contrary, without the leadership of the aristocracy of labor, which contains the educated elements of the working class suitable for leadership. Deprived of these elements, the real proletariat was able neither to organize trade unions, nor to form political parties. That is the real basic reason for the fact that at first the trade unions appeared.

"The trade unions acted at first only as organizations of the aristocracy of labor, and only later accepted unskilled workers. The classic example of this is Great Britain. There we see, after the first revolutionary period of Chartism, after the beginning of imperialist development, the split of the working class as pointed out by Marx, Engles and Lenin. We see the split caused by the aristocracy of labor—we see the aristocratic trade union. The mass of unskilled workers were not organized at all. It was only the vindictive attacks of the capitalist governments upon the privileges of the aristocracy of labor, court decisions against the existence of the trade unions of the labor aristocracy, which brought about a revolution. . . .

"This development, which we had in England in the 'nineties, only began in America in 1913. The war, the development of a giant, bureaucratic centralized state power, the interference of the government in the daily life of the workers and poor farmers, the use of government troops and of injunctions against strikers, the giant labor struggles in 1922 in which no less than one million workers were on strike at the same time, the profound industrial crisis in 1921, together with a catastrophic crisis of American agriculture, the trenchant fractional groupings within the old capitalist parties, which as an expression of the intensified struggle, threatened them with a split—all these factors drove the masses of the working class towards the formation of a Labor Party. . . ."

Outlook for a Labor Party

The conditions for a labor party have been improved within the last year. The bankruptcy of the non-partisan political policy of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, the avalanche of sweeping injunctions in the miners' strike, the wholesale and ruthless use of the government machinery as a strike-breaking machinery in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Colorado, the sharpening economic recession, the worsening agricultural conditions, the growing dissensions within the Republican Party, the forces of disintegration at work within the Democratic Party, the increasing interference by the growing centralized government in the everyday affairs of the lives of the workers, the further extension of the use of machinery which is wiping away skill lines, in addition to the factors making for a homogeneous American working class, are all forces for the development of a labor party in 1928.

But there is no certainty that there will be a labor party in 1928. The corrupt trade union bureaucracy, dominating the American Federation of Labor, whose apparatus is in reality a window of Wall Street; the clique of labor bankers infesting the trade union movement, the treacherous role played by the Socialist Party, the still insufficient strength of the Workers (Communist) Party, all these factors explain the slow tempo for the development of a labor party movement on a national, mass scale.

If there should not be a national labor party in 1928 then it is the duty of the workers to build state and local labor parties, to organize committees of progressive trade unionists and exploited farmers for a labor party. Should there not be a national labor party in 1928, then all workers should at least strive for the launching of a national united front labor ticket in 1928. Whatever differences the workers may have amongst themselves regarding other questions, they should not allow these differences to stand in the way of their uniting as a class, politically at least, under the banner of "A United Labor Ticket in 1928."

The Workers Party has no illusions as to what a labor party can and will do for the workers. We know that it is only the disciplined, highly class-conscious, trained, clear-visioned Communist Party with its Leninist program, that can and will lead the workers to victory. We look upon the labor party only as the next big and important step in the direction of the political development and emancipation of the American workers. The Communists feel that even though a labor party or a united labor ticket were to poll only one million votes, so long as it were a genuine party of the workers and poor farmers, completely independent from the big bourgeois parties, it would be a gigantic forward step and a tremendous victory for the American working class. Very likely if such a party or ticket were launched it would secure several million votes.

The task of the workers is, from now on, to do their all, to pitch in every ounce of their strength and resources towards the formation of a labor party or at least a united labor ticket. This is the most effective way in which the American workers can fight in the coming elections, in the coming months, in the next period, against the growing tyranny of the centralized government apparatus, the biggest strike-breaking agency in the world.

A labor party would be a powerful weapon in the hands of the workers to fight against the vicious injunction system, to mobilize the greatest mass for a war on "government by injunctions." The fight to save the trade unions which are now in the throes of a most acute crisis will be helped to a very large extent by the organization of a labor party. The struggle against American imperialism, the fight against the increasing war danger, the fight for the recognition of the Soviet Union, the fight for the right to strike, freedom of speech, press and assembly for the workers, for at least temporary relief of the poverty-stricken farmers—all of these measures will be advanced substantially through the organization of a national mass labor party.

Build and Back the Workers Party

Should the workers fail to organize a labor party or a united labor ticket in 1928, then it is their duty to support the only political party in the field which militantly and energetically fights for even the smallest interests of the working class—the Workers (Communist) Party. The Communists frankly stand for the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship—a government of the working class, by the working class and for the working class—and the development of a Communist society in the United States.

The American Communists, organized in the Workers (Communist) Party realize that they have a long and difficult road ahead of them. We are aware of the fact that no demands, no interests of the workers, are too small for us to fight for. The Workers (Communist) Party has no interests other than the interests of the working class. The saving of the standards of living of the workers, the fight against wage cuts, the fight for decent working conditions, against the speed-up and the spy system, for the saving of the trade unions, for the amalgamation of the existing craft unions into powerful militant industrial unions, the building of a labor party, the winning of strikes, the organization of the unorganized, the improvement of the conditions of the exploited farmers, the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the Philippines, Central and Latin-America; the recognition of the Soviet Union, the putting an end to all American imperial aggrandisement, paralyzing all the war plans and manoeuvres of Wall Street—these are the issues upon which the American Communists appeal to the workers and exploited farmers of this country for support. It is by fighting for these issues that the American workers will learn how to fight for even bigger and more fundamental interests, for the complete overthrow of imperialism, of the bourgeois system of exploitation and the substituting therefor of a proletarian, a genuine working-class democracy and a socialist system.

The American Communists know they have a difficult job ahead of them. The Workers (Communist) Party, as the American section of the Communist International, knows that the whole international capitalist system is sick to its bones and marrow and in its very heart and soul. Though for the moment American capitalism may appear invincible, may appear too strong to be beaten, yet American capitalism is only part of the whole international capitalist system. The present period of American imperialist vigor and ascendancy will not last long. Already we see growing difficulties for the Shylock among the world imperialist powers. We see multiplying contradictions weakening the system of capitalist exploitation in the United States.

The American Communists are dedicated to the purpose of inspiring and leading the working class towards every forward step. The bigger the forward step by the workers the better; but no forward step is too small. Our paramount objective is to work increasingly for establishing in the United States a government of the working class, by the working class, and for the working class—towards realizing the Communist Society.

On this program the Workers (Communist) Party asks the support of every honest worker, of every class-conscious proletarian, of every workingman and workingwomen who has even the slightest class pride and class interest at heart.

THE END

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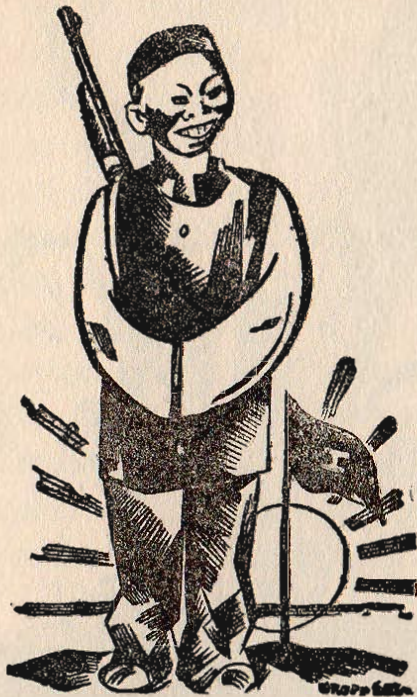
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